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U.S. Strategic Bases in the Atlantic

BY A. RANDLE ELLIOTT

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U.S. Strategic Bases in the Atlantic

BY A. RANDLE ELLIOTT

This is the first of two reports; the second, on United States defense outposts in the Pacific, will be published shortly.

THE Anglo-American transaction of September 2, 1940, involving the exchange of 50 United States over-age destroyers for leases on air and naval base sites at eight British colonies in the Western Hemisphere, was the most far-reaching of a series of United States moves to strengthen American defenses on the Atlantic seacoast. When developed, the new United States leaseholds in Newfoundland, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Antigua, St. Lucia, Trinidad, and British Guiana will fill a pressing need for advance bases in the Atlantic.¹ By December 3 President Roosevelt had allocated \$75,000,000 of emergency defense funds² for preparation of piers, anchorages, repair shops, fuel oil storage, and barracks at the eight base sites; and army engineers were already at work on the major projects in Newfoundland and Bermuda. Work is also being pushed ahead rapidly on older United States defense outposts in the Caribbean, where

1. Except for the Caribbean bases at Guantánamo, Cuba, and San Juan, Puerto Rico, the United States has had only shore bases to protect its Atlantic coast. Naval bases and stations are at: Portsmouth, New Hampshire (navy yard); Boston, Massachusetts (navy yard); Newport, Rhode Island (torpedo station); New London, Connecticut (submarine base); New York City (naval base); Philadelphia (navy yard); Washington, D.C. (navy yard); Norfolk, Virginia (naval base); Charleston, South Carolina (navy yard); and Key West, Florida. The Key West naval station has been on an inactive status in recent years, but was reopened as a destroyer base after the European war started. On December 15, 1940 three submarines were also assigned to the station, which was a submarine base during the World War. The most important Marine barracks are at Quantico, Virginia, and Parris Island, South Carolina. Army and navy air bases, with varying degrees of utility, are located at many points along the Atlantic seaboard; they all have valuable aviation facilities for peacetime operations, and could be quickly expanded to meet wartime needs.

2. In 1940 Congress placed the sum of \$393,500,000 at the President's disposal for purposes of national defense—\$261,500,000 in cash and \$132,000,000 in contract authorizations. Cf. *The New York Times*, January 2, 1941.

Puerto Rico is emerging as a primary base for defense of the Panama Canal and the eastern coast of the United States.

The destroyers-for-bases deal raised broader questions of Anglo-American cooperation which as yet have remained unanswered. While the United States fulfilled its obligations by transferring the reconditioned destroyers immediately, Britain contracted to lease the bases for 99 years, "free from all rent and charges other than . . . to compensate the owners of private property." At the same time, in response to an inquiry from Secretary of State Hull, the British government reaffirmed its "settled policy . . . never to surrender or sink the British Fleet in the event of the waters surrounding the British Isles becoming untenable for His Majesty's Ships."³ Although Attorney General Jackson expressly announced that the United States "undertakes no defense of the possessions of any country,"⁴ the question has been raised whether the United States is not now the actual successor to Britain's obligations to defend not only the eight colonies in which leaseholds have been granted, but all British territory on this side of the Atlantic. Should Britain be defeated or the British fleet be forced to withdraw from its home waters, the United States, for reasons of self-interest, might find it necessary to prevent totalitarian forces from establishing themselves on British territory in the Western Hemisphere, and subsequently attacking

3. For texts of notes exchanged between the British Ambassador at Washington and the Secretary of State, August 29-September 2, cf. Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, "Exchange of Notes Regarding United States Destroyers and Naval and Air Facilities for the United States in British Transatlantic Territories," Cmd. 6224 (London, H.M. Stationery Office, September 1940); *Department of State Bulletin*, September 7, 1940, pp. 195, 199-200.

4. For the Attorney General's ruling (August 27, 1940) on the legality of the executive agreement, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 201-207. For a summary of the legal controversy over the agreement, and a critique of the Attorney General's opinion, cf. H. W. Briggs, "Neglected Aspects of the Destroyer Deal," *American Journal of International Law*, October 1940, pp. 569-87.

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181

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this country. Transfer of the destroyers to Britain was, in fact, a preventive measure to avoid the consequences that a British defeat might entail for America. By augmenting Britain's naval strength, the destroyer deal also reinforced United States interests in the Atlantic, since this country has long relied on the British navy for support in keeping Atlantic shipping lanes open—especially during the past 7 years, when the United States fleet has been concentrated in the Pacific. The new bases, moreover, will extend the field of American naval action by almost 1,000 miles, and accordingly reduce the area which Britain must patrol. Since United States ships and planes are now patrolling American waters out of Newfoundland, Bermuda, Antigua and St. Lucia, a number of British warships have been freed for service nearer the British Isles.

German preparations for a "knockout blow" at British sea power⁵ have already raised the question of additional American aid to Britain. A *quid pro quo* for more United States assistance might be in the form of rights to use existing British resources in the eight colonies, or leases on more base sites in other colonies. It is significant that the terms of the September 2 agreements left open for subsequent settlement the problems of "the exact location and bounds of the aforesaid bases, the necessary seaward coast and anti-aircraft defenses, the location of sufficient military garrisons, stores and other necessary auxiliary facilities."⁶ While the deferred settlement of specific rights has led to some disagreement with local residents in the colonies of Bermuda, St. Lucia and Trinidad, British and American officials have concurred on most of the issues under discussion. Only in Trinidad has serious difference of opinion barred the assignment of exact sites for United States bases.

The increasing community of interest between Britain and the United States was clearly illustrated by the creation, on August 18, of a Permanent Joint Board for Canadian-United States defense. This board, which represents an unprecedented step in Canadian-American relations, intimately involved the United States in British Commonwealth affairs.⁷ Following their first meeting on August 26, military and civilian members of the board jointly inspected defenses of both countries, and have met frequently to discuss common military problems. If the needs of hemisphere defense

should require joint use of United States coastal bases, the Canadian naval base at Halifax, or the large air bases at Botwood and Hattie's Camp in Newfoundland—not included in the September 2 transaction—it is assumed that arrangements could be promptly made through the Canadian-American board.

LATIN AMERICAN BASES

Acquisition of sites for naval and air bases from Britain has brought up the possibility of obtaining similar bases in Latin America. United States forces now have use of the best strategic positions on this side of the North Atlantic, and consequently are in an excellent position to prevent or defeat any attempt by a European power to invade United States territory. In the South Atlantic, however, this country lacks adequate bases to safeguard the Western Hemisphere against aggression. The farthest United States outpost in that region is the new air base in British Guiana, 1,772 miles by plane from Natal, on the eastern "bulge" of Brazil, while the southernmost naval base foreseen at present is to be established in Trinidad, over 1,900 miles by sea from Natal. The bulge of Brazil, however, is only 1,619 miles from the French naval and air base at Dakar, in West Africa. Owing to the uncertainty surrounding Franco-German relations, the possibility that Germany might eventually use French territory as a base for operations against America should not be ignored. The 21 American republics recognized this problem shortly after France's surrender. At the Havana Conference of Foreign Ministers in July 1940 they adopted a common policy regarding European colonies in the Western Hemisphere, and agreed that in an emergency each of the American republics might take any action required "for its own defense or that of the Continent."⁸

While the acquisition of bases from Britain was not a result of inter-American conferences, the transaction was concluded in accordance with the Act of Havana. The United States government formally accepted the bases in order "to enhance the national security of the United States and greatly to strengthen its ability to cooperate effectively with the other nations of the Americas in the defense of the Western Hemisphere."⁹ On September 6 Secretary Hull instructed United States diplomatic missions throughout Latin

5. Cf. the last public speech of the late Lord Lothian, British Ambassador to Washington, *The New York Times*, December 12, 1940.

6. United States, *Executive Agreement Series No. 181* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1940), p. 2.

7. Cf. J. F. Green, "Canada and United States Push Defense Plan," *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, August 30, 1940, p. 2.

8. For complete text of the Act of Havana, cf. *Department of State Bulletin*, August 24, 1940, pp. 138-39. For text of the Convention of Havana, which created an "Inter-American Commission for Territorial Administration" of European Colonies in the Western Hemisphere, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 145-48.

9. Letter of Secretary of State Hull to Lord Lothian, September 2, 1940, in *Executive Agreement Series No. 181*, cited, p. 4.

America to notify each of the Latin American governments that "the resulting facilities at these bases will, of course, be made available alike to all American republics . . . in entire harmony with the spirit of the pronouncements made and the understandings reached at the conferences of Lima, Panama, and Habana."¹⁰ In order to speed the defense cooperation anticipated at Havana, military representatives from most of the Latin American republics were invited to Washington in September and October 1940 to study United States defenses. Although specific arrangements for joint defense of the Western Hemisphere apparently have not been made, the Latin American governments have shown increasing confidence in the United States and increasing recognition of the need for common action should this hemisphere be threatened with aggression from overseas.

Despite the rapid growth of Pan-American cooperation in recent years, and the evident tendency toward a common policy of hemisphere defense, substantial opposition has appeared in Latin America to suggestions that the United States obtain bases there, either by cession or by lease. The United States government has persistently maintained that it is not interested in buying or leasing bases in Latin America, although on November 13 Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles indicated that this country might accept invitations to share in the use of such bases.¹¹ In view of the need for military insurance against invasion of South America, and subsequent attack on the Panama Canal and North America, the United States would doubtless be ready to provide any Latin American government with technical and financial aid for development of strategic bases to defend the Western Hemisphere. Under the plan apparently being considered, the bases would be built by the Latin American governments themselves and would remain completely under the jurisdiction of the country in whose territory they might be located; yet, like the new United States leaseholds from Britain, they would be available to every American republic for purposes of hemisphere defense.¹²

10. *Department of State Bulletin*, September 7, 1940, p. 196.

11. Cf. *The New York Times*, November 14, 1940. Mr. Welles, replying to rumors that the United States was seeking air and naval bases in Uruguay, emphatically denied that the United States government had ever sought "directly or indirectly to obtain the lease or cession" of such bases. "In none of our conversations with any of the other American republics," he announced, "has there ever been involved the possibility of any suggestions on our part which would affect in any sense the sovereignty of any other American nation." Cf. *Department of State Bulletin*, November 16, 1940, p. 433.

12. Although unofficial reports have stated that a series of such "inter-American bases" are now being selected, as yet none of the American governments has confirmed these reports. Cf. *La Prensa* (New York), December 19, 1940.

FUNCTION OF OUTLYING BASES

Owing to America's insular position, the navy is the first instrument of United States defense, and American security is initially dependent on adequate bases to support the fleet.¹³ While this country's policy is fundamentally defensive, the armed forces must prepare for offensive action as the surest means of discouraging attack. Any potential enemy country must be shown that, by attacking the United States, it would risk, first, the loss of its forces before they could approach American shores and, secondly, the severance of its sea communications—which, in the long run, might determine the outcome of the conflict.¹⁴ The most effective use of United States naval forces, therefore, requires outlying bases so that the fleet can safely operate far from American shores; at the same time, it is imperative that hostile powers be kept from acquiring any available sites for bases in this hemisphere.

A fleet and its air force supported by adequate bases can operate successfully, in a given theater of war, with fewer combat units than would be needed without such support.¹⁵ Since the United States will require several years to build a "two-ocean" navy and an adequate air force, it must now utilize every strategic advantage which might increase the effectiveness of its ships and planes. The acquisition of outlying bases will enhance the value of existing vessels and naval aircraft without materially increasing the tasks assigned to them. Bases are essentially for support of the fleet, rather than the fleet for protection of the bases. While the navy must be free to carry the battle to the enemy and successfully engage him, the army is responsible for defending all permanent naval shore installations. The Marine Corps, with its detachments of anti-aircraft units and highly mobile battalions trained for fighting on both land and sea, is charged with the temporary defense of outlying bases. In offensive naval operations the Marines function as ship-to-shore units prepared to take an enemy position and hold it until reinforcements arrive.

All military bases may be evaluated in terms of Admiral Mahan's essential criteria for a good naval

13. Cf. Major G. F. Eliot, "For Impregnable Defense," *The New Republic*, March 30, 1938, p. 241.

14. President Roosevelt, in his Dayton speech on October 12, 1940, recognized the importance of sea communications to the United States: "When we speak of defending this Western Hemisphere . . ." he said, "we include the right to the peaceful use of the Atlantic Ocean and of the Pacific." Text in *The New York Times*, October 13, 1940.

15. Cf. Captain D. W. Knox, "The Ships that Count," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, October 1936, p. 1426; also Major G. F. Eliot, *New York Herald Tribune*, March 7, 1940.

base: position, resources and strength.¹⁶ Although a site's *position* can be determined only by nature, its strategic value may increase or decrease as the conditions and instruments of warfare change. In view of the conditions of 1941 warfare, and the tactical operating range of modern warships (2,000 to 3,000 miles) and aircraft (up to 1,000 miles, or about 750 miles for a loaded bomber), the outlying bases of the United States—both old and new—are well placed. They form a protective screen around the entire country, and can be supplied from the United States along interior lines of communication even in time of war. The *resources* of a base are partially but not entirely dependent on natural endowment. In addition to natural advantages, such as good harbors, local food supplies and labor, a base should have artificial resources such as drydocks, landing fields, machine shops, barracks, and storage space for stocks of food, munitions and spare parts. Although the particular sites recently acquired for bases are by no means the best available in the eight British colonies, they will meet the immediate needs of American naval vessels and planes. Authorized developments will soon increase their value, while in any joint threat to British and American interests, United States forces would presumably be granted prompt use of superior resources already existing in near-by British territory. For the time being, the new naval and air stations will extend the usefulness of United States bases which are more richly endowed with both natural and artificial resources. Mahan's third requisite, *strength*, can be maintained only by continuous building of new fortifications to meet the increasing demands of modern warfare, and by constant changes in size of garrisons and type of shore facilities. While entirely new defenses must be installed wherever required at the base sites leased from Britain, the older United States bases in the Caribbean area are already reasonably well defended. The present building program, moreover, has been accelerated because of expanding war and unsettled world conditions, and is now well ahead of schedule.

THE NEW DEFENSE OUTPOSTS¹⁷

The new sites leased from Great Britain remedy a significant weakness in the strategic position of the United States—lack of offshore bases in the Atlantic. Newfoundland and Bermuda will be most useful for

protecting the vital, thickly populated industrial areas along the eastern seaboard. From those islands, planes can patrol the major sea lanes between the United States and Europe, while ships stationed there can largely control access to United States coasts from the Atlantic. Since both islands are within effective bombing range of large eastern cities, an enemy could seriously menace this country by establishing control over these outposts. Conversely, as the only islands suitable for bases near the North Atlantic coasts, they are of inestimable value for United States defense.

Planes, submarines, and cruising warships based in NEWFOUNDLAND, less than 1,000 miles from the southern tip of Greenland, will close a leading route for possible invasion of the United States—via southern Greenland and Newfoundland or Canada. In southeastern Newfoundland, the United States was granted rights for the establishment of an air base on the Argentia Peninsula and the south side of Little Placentia Harbor.¹⁸ This harbor is generally ice-free for 11 months of the year, when it will be valuable for seaplanes; the adjoining shores will be useful for land planes whenever the weather permits flying.¹⁹ An army training ground will also be established on the southern shore of Little Placentia Harbor, and an army defensive force will be garrisoned at barracks to be built near St. John's. A staging field for refueling and servicing army planes, while en route between the United States and the new base, is projected in western Newfoundland, near St. George Bay. British authorities, moreover, may eventually grant the United States army air corps permission to share in the use of Newfoundland Airport, north of Gander Lake in the central part of the island. This field, built in 1935-36 on more than 800 acres of firm soil, is one of the largest airports in the world and is well equipped to service the largest bombers.²⁰ Like the British Air Ministry base at Botwood, both St. George Bay and Newfoundland Airport lie in areas where fog is light. In addition to the sites for air bases and an army post, a United States naval station is to be set up on the south side of St. John's harbor, to include about 1,250 feet of wharfage for handling supply stores and equipment. The small size and extreme narrowness of St. John's harbor preclude its development as a major naval base, but it will be very useful

17. For a more detailed study of the eight British colonies in which the United States has base rights, cf. A. R. Elliott, "European Colonies in the Western Hemisphere," *Foreign Policy Reports*, August 15, 1940. An extensive analysis of the Caribbean colonies is given in *European Possessions in the Caribbean Area* (New York, American Geographical Society, 1940), Map of Hispanic America Publications, No. 4.

18. For a detailed list of the base sites agreed on by Britain and the United States, cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Press Release*, November 18, 1940.

19. Heavy fogs, storms and ice often render Newfoundland hazardous for flying in the late fall, winter and early spring. For a discussion of fog hazards at Newfoundland, cf. F. Entwistle, "The Meteorological Problem of the North Atlantic," *Journal of the Royal Aeronautical Society*, February 1939, pp. 80-81.

20. Cf. S. T. Brooks, "Newfoundland—Gibraltar of the North," *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Weekly Magazine Section*, September 14, 1940, p. 6.

16. The needs of a particular base vary considerably with the purpose for which it is intended—whether it is a primary operating base or merely an advance outpost—but any base with good position, resources and strength will be more useful than without these assets. Cf. Captain W. D. Puleston, *Mahan* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1939); Major G. F. Eliot, *The Ramparts We Watch* (New York, Reynal and Hitchcock, 1938), pp. 132-34.

for naval supply and repairs in northern waters. It is deep enough to accommodate a capital ship, and is rarely frozen over in winter. St. John's, moreover, has a good commercial drydock sufficiently large for cruisers. From there, long-range submarines and surface vessels can easily patrol the coasts of Greenland.

BERMUDA, less than 1,000 miles from every large port on the Atlantic coast of both the United States and Canada, will form the spearhead of the new "naval phalanx." For many years the Great Sound of Bermuda, with docking and other repair facilities on Ireland Island, has been the home station of the British navy's "American and West Indies Fleet"; during the World War Britain permitted the United States navy to use these facilities. Because of coral reefs which protect naval anchorages in the Great Sound and north of Castle Harbor, it would be extremely difficult for a hostile fleet to seize Bermuda. In the eastern part of the island, the United States has the right to build a major operating base for warships, seaplanes and land planes at Castle Harbor.²¹ This circular harbor is over two miles in diameter, and may be entered either from inside the Bermuda coral breakwater or from the open sea. The width and depth of the entrances will have to be extended, and the harbor dredged to accommodate deep-draft vessels, but the water is already sufficiently deep and sheltered for seaplanes. A land-plane base is to be constructed on Long Bird Island to the north, and storages for explosives are to be set up on the small islands southeast of the harbor. Although the necessary improvements will require many months, Bermuda will be a useful base long before construction work is completed.

With the single exception of Trinidad, which is projected as an operations base, all of the new United States bases in the Caribbean area will be developed as supply depots or as staging bases for patrol squadrons. In the BAHAMAS, an air base will be established to prevent hostile powers from using these islands as a hidden source of supplies or as a center for raids by small destroyers, tender-based seaplanes or submarines.²² On the southern coast of JAMAICA, the lease provides for a United States fleet anchorage at Portland Bight,²³ 594 miles from the Panama Canal

and about 180 miles south of the United States naval station at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Defense batteries are to be located on the shore around the bight, and on Pigeon Island. British and United States forces will share in the use of military airfields and the British dockyard at Port Royal, the resources of which are to be developed by the United States.²⁴ In addition to its role as a watch station on the naval lifeline between the Atlantic and the Pacific, the new outpost—centrally located between the Panama Canal, other American bases and the United States—will be most valuable as the main supply depot for the United States fleet and air forces in the Caribbean.

The new bases along the eastern rim of the Caribbean will help eliminate the greatest gap in American control over approaches to the Panama Canal from the Atlantic. Until September 1940 the United States controlled access to the Caribbean from the north, but not from the southeast. The much-used passage between Tobago and Trinidad—on the direct route from the South Atlantic to Panama—is 518 miles from the easternmost defense outpost of the United States at St. Thomas, in the Virgin Islands. Light, short-range planes, to operate most effectively, require staging bases at least every 400 miles. The site for a new seaplane base at Parham Sound,²⁵ ANTIGUA, is 197 miles east-southeast of St. Thomas, while a second seaplane base at Gros Islet Bay, St. LUCIA, will advance this country's chain of guard stations another 210 miles. Neither Parham Sound nor Gros Islet Bay is large enough for extensive development, but the strategy of American defense requires only patrol stations, rather than operating bases, at these intermediate points. On December 21 local officials in St. Lucia announced that the United States had just been granted use of a large land area for a heavy bomber patrol station at Vieux Fort, on the southern tip of the island.²⁶ A major air and naval base is projected for the island of TRINIDAD, 231 miles south of St. Lucia. Local authorities and United States officials have not yet agreed on the exact sites to be included in the lease, but the September 2 arrangement calls for a base on "the west coast of Trinidad in the Gulf of Paria," which could be developed as the most powerful United States base in the Caribbean.

21. At present there are no landing fields in Bermuda; a commercial seaplane station, however, is located on Darrell Island, two miles southwest of Hamilton. For details on landing fields, seaplane anchorages and meteorological conditions in Bermuda and the West Indies, cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Naval Air Pilot: West Indies* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1940).

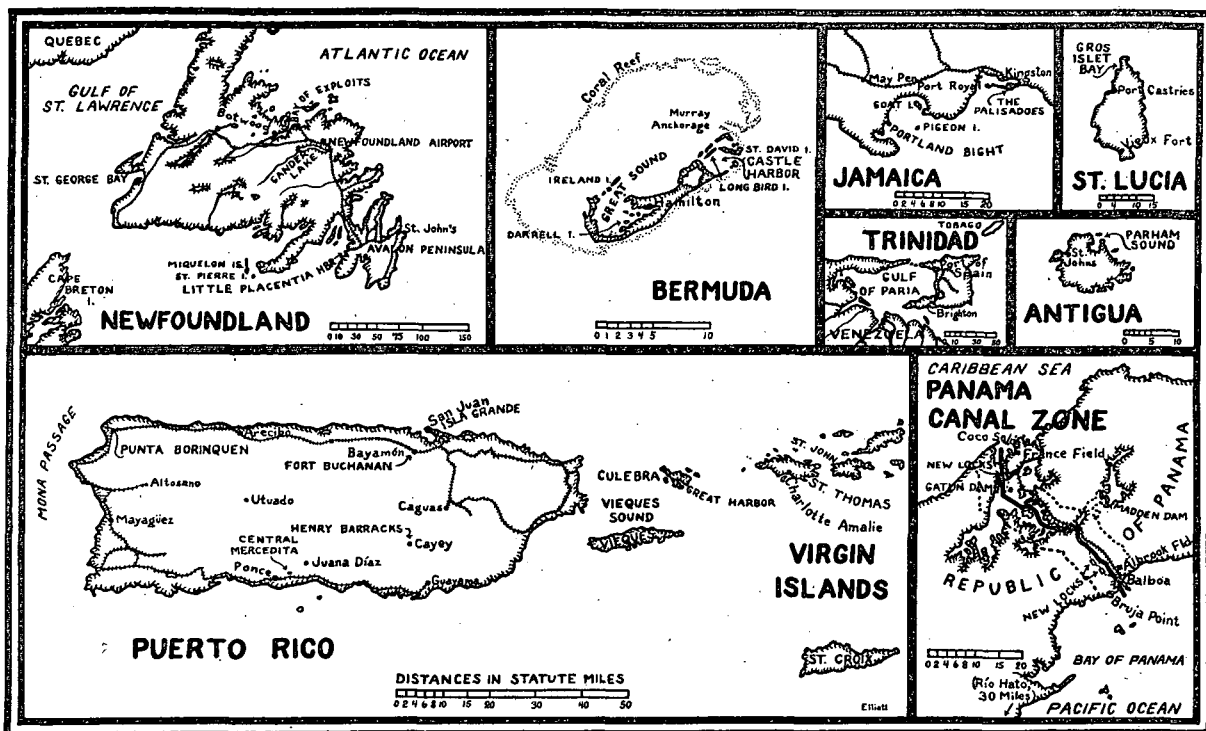
22. On November 18 the Navy Department announced that the United States would have the use of Abraham Bay and a small area of adjacent land on Mayaguana Island, 160 miles north of the important Windward Passage between the Atlantic and the Caribbean. Abraham Bay is a large bight with adequate depth for seaplanes (six to ten feet) and small vessels, but its entrance is obstructed by a dangerous reef. Since essential maintenance and supply ships would have to anchor offshore in exposed waters, other sites are being considered for the Bahama base.

23. There are several excellent anchorages in Portland Bight for moderate-sized vessels, and sufficient space for deep-draft vessels. Kingston and Port Royal Harbors, 20 miles to the east, are deep and spacious enough for use by any units of the fleet.

24. There are no landing fields on the island, but one is now under construction on the Palisadoes, across the harbor southeast of Kingston, and the United States has been granted the right to build an emergency air field five miles south of May Pen, near Portland Bight. The only established seaplane station, at Kingston, has limited repair facilities. Cf. *Naval Air Pilot*, cited.

25. Parham Sound is on the northeastern side of the island, well protected from rollers—eastward by Long Island and northward by shoals. It has good holding ground for anchorage, and can receive a few vessels of deep draft. By stationing supply ships and tenders there, the sound could be converted into a seaplane base overnight. Pan-American Airways maintains a seaplane anchorage, with stores and equipment for minor repairs, across the island at St. John's harbor, about five miles from the United States base site.

26. Cf. *The New York Times*, December 22, 1940. For a descriptive account of Gros Islet Bay and Vieux Fort, cf. Clendon Hayes-Mason and D. A. Hepburn, "St. Lucia: To Have and To Hold," *Christian Science Monitor*, *Weekly Magazine Section*, December 28, 1940, pp. 2, 15.



bean. Averaging about 80 miles long and 40 miles wide, the Gulf of Paria is almost landlocked and contains a number of sheltered anchorages. After its southern approach is dredged to permit use by heavy vessels, this gulf will have two deep-water entrances—an invaluable strategic asset to the fleet in time of war.²⁷ Trinidad, moreover, is rich in resources of foodstuffs and labor power, while its oil wells and refineries will provide essential fuel requirements for United States ships and planes. The southernmost defense outposts will be set up in BRITISH GUIANA on the northeastern coast of South America, 315 miles beyond Trinidad. A seaplane base will be maintained at the mouth of the Essequibo river, while a base for land planes will be constructed on the bank of the Demerara river, 25 miles south of Georgetown. These outposts in British Guiana, intended primarily for reconnaissance, should help detect an approaching enemy and report his advance to fighting forces which will be stationed at Trinidad. The British Guiana air base will extend the range of United States patrol planes southwest to the mouth of the Amazon river, within 1,000 miles of Natal. The remaining distance to this strategic point, however, could be patrolled only by planes based in Brazil.

OLDER BASES IN THE CARIBBEAN

Long before acquiring rights to the bases from Great Britain, the United States had been reinforcing

27. There are few good sites for air bases in Trinidad, owing to the turbulent winds. A fine seaplane anchorage, however, is located at Cocorite Bay, 2½ miles northwest of Port of Spain, where the mainland provides a lee from prevailing winds in the winter months. Pan-American Airways has a seaplane station there, with adequate storage and repair facilities.

its older defenses in the vital Caribbean area, which Admiral Mahan termed “the strategic key of two great oceans.” For defense of the continental coast and the Panama Canal, the United States sites at Guantánamo Bay (Cuba), San Juan (Puerto Rico), and St. Thomas (Virgin Islands) “are strategically as well placed . . . as could be chosen.”²⁸ Warships and planes based at these locations can dominate the two main Atlantic approaches to the Panama Canal, the Windward and Mona Passages. Guantánamo, 696 miles from the Canal and only 500 by air from the Florida coast, commands the former passage, while San Juan, 544 miles eastward, controls the latter. The naval and air stations at St. Thomas, 75 miles east of San Juan, and Culebra Island, off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico, are functional units of the San Juan base.

GUANTANAMO BAY²⁹ is a fleet-operating area large enough to accommodate, at the same time, most of the

28. Cf. United States, 76th Congress, 1st Session, House Document No. 65, *Report on Need of Additional Naval Bases to Defend the Coasts of the United States, its Territories, and Possessions*, p. 15.

29. Guantánamo Bay, on the southeastern coast of Cuba, is held by the United States on perpetual lease, effected by executive agreement on February 16/23, 1903, in fulfillment of Article VII of the Cuban constitution. At the same time, the United States leased Bahía Honda, 50 miles west of Havana. The agreement stipulates that both areas are “for use as coaling or naval stations only, and for no other purpose.” Although no specific duration is placed on the lease, by implication it is for perpetuity, since in the agreement “Cuba consents that during the period of the occupation by the United States of said areas . . . the United States shall exercise complete jurisdiction and control over and within said areas.” Cf. W. M. Malloy, compiler, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776-1909* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1910), vol. 1, pp. 358-59.

vessels in the United States navy.³⁰ It is without permanent defenses of any kind, but so long as the fleet is stationed in near-by waters, reinforced by fighting aircraft based in the Caribbean area, there is no need for heavy coastal defenses at Guantánamo. In an emergency which would draw the fleet from its Caribbean base, adequate mobile defense equipment could be rushed to Guantánamo in two days from the Marine base at Quantico, Virginia. During the past year, additional aviation facilities have been provided at the Guantánamo naval station,³¹ where the navy retains a small permanent force and the Marines maintain a barracks for training and local defense. A naval magazine is located there to meet ordinary ammunition needs of the fleet, and in any emergency additional supplies could be transported to Guantánamo from the United States within 24 hours—by car ferry from Port Everglades (Florida) to Havana, and from there by rail direct to the naval station. From the important aspect of supply, therefore, the naval station at Guantánamo has many advantages of a domestic base. Although in the past a number of Cubans have resented United States treaty rights at Guantánamo as an infringement on their sovereignty, at present there is reason to believe that, for purposes of hemisphere defense, this country can rely on the friendly cooperation of Cuba.³²

At PUERTO RICO the United States is building its major base in the eastern Caribbean. Within the past year, the island has become a citadel from which planes can be projected to defend the Panama Canal. Two powerful air bases are being constructed—a navy base at Isla Grande, just across the bay from San Juan, and an army base at Punta Borinquen, a high plateau on the northwest corner of the island overlooking the Mona Passage. Work started at Isla Grande three days after the European war began in

September 1939, and should be completed by the end of June 1941.³³ The steel framework has already been erected for two of the world's largest seaplane hangars, each of which will shelter about 50 of the navy's biggest bombers and 100 combat and scouting planes. Approximately 100 permanent buildings are being constructed simultaneously. Barracks, naval storehouses (chiefly for fuel, plane parts and foodstuffs), repair shops, an electricity generating plant, an independent water supply system, and other facilities will make this naval air establishment virtually self-sufficient. During the coming year berthing space and fuel storage will also be provided for submarines at Isla Grande, to meet those needs which cannot readily be supplied by submarine tenders. A new cruiser drydock, moreover, is nearing completion at San Juan harbor, which has been dredged deep enough (35 feet in the center channel) to accommodate aircraft carriers. The dock has been built and is owned by the Insular Government of Puerto Rico, but will provide the United States navy with repair facilities urgently needed in the Caribbean area.³⁴

While the navy has been improving its facilities at Puerto Rico, to support the fleet in Atlantic and Caribbean operations, the army has also undertaken extensive preparations to defend the island itself. Congress in 1940 authorized expenditures for installation of a major caliber seacoast battery to protect San Juan harbor against attack, emplacement of other permanent batteries to defend secondary harbors and landings around the island, installation of fire control for the seacoast guns, storage of ammunition reserves at the general depot south of San Juan, and seacoast searchlight matériel.³⁵ The most important army posts are located at Fort Buchanan, 15 miles southeast of San Juan, and at Henry Barracks, 12 miles north of Guayama, near the southern coast. From these posts the army's mobile artillery units can reach almost any part of the island within a few hours. Although the Puerto Rican Department is still weak in anti-aircraft defenses, this defect is rapidly being remedied. The new 2,588-acre army airfield at Punta Borinquen is situated on the best site for a land-plane base that exists in Puerto Rico.³⁶ The huge airdrome is designed as a

On two occasions the United States government has agreed to surrender its rights in Bahía Honda—in 1911, specifically, in return for increased rights at Guantánamo, and in 1934 by implication—but neither of these agreements has been ratified.

30. When the shore facilities, dredging and moorings provided for in 1940 appropriations are completed, Guantánamo Bay will be a primary base substantially able to service the fleet. Cf. testimony of Rear Admiral Ben Moreell, Chief, Bureau of Yards and Docks, U.S., 76th Congress, 3d Session, *Hearings before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations on the Second Supplemental National Defense Appropriation Bill for 1941* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1940), pp. 69, 78.

31. A second ramp and seaplane parking area have been constructed, and half a standard seaplane hangar is now being built. The flying field on McCalla Hill has been graded and part of the runways surfaced, while landing strips have been prepared on Leeward Point. Cf. *Annual Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, U.S. Navy, for the Fiscal Year, 1940* (Washington, mimeographed, December 5, 1940), p. 11.

32. Cf. Commission on Cuban Affairs, *Problems of the New Cuba* (New York, Foreign Policy Association, 1935), pp. 499-500; Cosme de la Torriente, "Cuba, America and the War," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1940, pp. 150-51.

33. For details of army and navy construction in Puerto Rico, cf. dispatches of W. P. Kennedy, *Washington Evening Star*, October 7, 8, 1940; Harwood Hull, *The New York Times*, December 15, 1940; special correspondence in *La Prensa* (New York), November 1, December 11, 1940.

34. The new graving dock will be finished about the same time as the Isla Grande air base, and will accommodate ships drawing up to 29 feet. Military experts have claimed it will increase by nearly 25 per cent the fleet's efficiency in Caribbean operations. There is no other place where a large cruiser could be repaired in those waters at present. A new United States battleship-size drydock "for the Caribbean Area" is projected, but its specific location has not yet been announced. Since the destroyer-base deal with Britain, Jamaica has been suggested as a desirable site for the large drydock.

35. Prior to initiation of the current seacoast defense projects, Puerto Rico had only a battery of field guns. Cf. testimony of Colonel R. W. Crawford, U.S., 76th Congress, 3d Session, *Hearings before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations on the Supplemental National Defense Appropriation Bill for 1941* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1940), pp. 96-97.

36. Testimony of Major General H. H. Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Corps, U.S., 76th Congress, 3d Session, *Hearings before the House Subcommittee on the Military Establishment Appropriation Bill for 1941* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1940), p. 385.

base for the army's "flying fortresses" and other large reconnaissance bombers, nine of which arrived in Puerto Rico over a year ago, and have been cooperating with navy planes from Isla Grande in patrolling the American neutrality zone.³⁷ When completed, Borinquen Field, like Isla Grande, will be virtually a self-contained community of 5,000 people.

The army has also planned several auxiliary airports to accommodate the increased numbers of bomber, pursuit and reconnaissance squadrons to be sent to Puerto Rico. While there are many small airfields throughout the island which could be used by light pursuit planes operating singly, adequate fortification of Puerto Rico requires additional fields suitable for squadrons of fighter craft and heavy bombers. Eight of these, including emergency fields, have been planned. The first to be ready for use (January 1941) is at Juana Díaz, less than 10 miles from the city of Ponce near the southern coast of the island. This will be used as a training field for parachutists, as a home base for pursuit planes, and as a supporting station and emergency repair field for the larger planes based at Borinquen.³⁸ Additional auxiliary airports have been announced for Arecibo, on the northern coast, and Mayagüez, on the western coast. The United States Marines use the Central Mercedita Airfield at Ponce during their Caribbean maneuvers. The Puerto Rican government, moreover, has constructed runways almost a mile long for military airplanes on Mona Island (in the center of Mona Passage) and Culebra and Vieques Islands (about 20 and 10 miles, respectively, east of Puerto Rico).³⁹

Despite the manifest readiness of the Insular Government to cooperate with Federal authorities in strengthening Puerto Rican defenses, until very recently the island has remained a source of national weakness rather than strength, owing to the economic political and cultural unrest of its people.⁴⁰ The economic stimulation of the extensive defense projects has done much to eliminate unemployment and inspire confidence that the local standard of living will be improved;⁴¹ but, unless the trend toward civilian

well-being can be placed on a durable basis, the island's powerful fortifications may convey a false impression of strength.

Culebra and Vieques Islands, both administered by the Insular Government of Puerto Rico, are useful adjuncts of the San Juan base. Because capital ships cannot use the harbors at San Juan and St. Thomas, the most important United States naval anchorage east of Guantánamo is under the lee of Culebra, just outside of Great Harbor.⁴² A good part of the annual winter maneuvers in the Caribbean are staged here, although the Culebra naval station—like that at St. Thomas—has been inoperative in recent years. Vieques Sound—between the islands of Vieques, Culebra and Puerto Rico, with entrances to the north, east and south—is being considered for a new primary fleet base. It has greater potentialities for the development of a powerful base than any other place in the Caribbean north of Trinidad. With a breakwater to knock down ocean swells coming through the northern passage (between Culebra and Puerto Rico), Vieques Sound would afford excellent anchorage for the entire fleet, and could be adequately protected by aircraft based on the surrounding American islands. Its strategic situation, moreover, is unexcelled. With a southern base at Trinidad, Vieques Sound might be used either as an advance base for reinforcement of vessels in the Gulf of Paria, or—in case the fleet should be driven from Trinidad—as a stronghold toward which to withdraw.

The only outlying Marine base of the United States is Bourne Field, in the VIRGIN ISLANDS. This is a permanent base air detachment, two miles from Charlotte Amalie, on the Island of St. Thomas. The field was established in 1935 by Presidential order, and in June 1940 Congress appropriated \$1,500,000 for additional aviation shore facilities there.⁴³ It now has a runway more than 3,000 feet long, and a new ramp for the operation of seaplanes is almost completed.⁴⁴ A submarine base is also located at Charlotte Amalie, which has a fine harbor used by United States de-

37. Hangars and shops already have been completed to care for 40 planes of various types, and over 4,000 feet of the main 7,000-foot runway has been laid down and is in constant use. Three other runways, of 4,000 feet each, are being built at different angles across the original track.

38. Cf. San Juan dispatch, *La Prensa* (New York), November 1, 1940.

39. *Thirty-ninth Annual Report of the Governor of Puerto Rico* (San Juan, Bureau of Supplies, Printing and Transportation, 1939), p. 17.

40. Much has been written about destitution and its attendant ills in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. For its relation to problems of defense, cf. Colonel C. I. Crockett, "Island Bulwarks," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, March 1940, pp. 372-76; Arturo Morales-Carrion, "Puerto-Rico: The Fortress or the City?" *The Inter-American Quarterly*, July 1940, pp. 36, 45-46.

41. Puerto Ricans have supported the defense program in many ways. They have readily enlisted in the army, which pays better than many vocations in the island, and have enthusiastically volunteered for service in the Puerto Rican National Guard, which consists of two infantry regiments with 118 officers and more than 2,100 enlisted men. Semi-monthly blackouts, for all Puerto

Rican cities with more than 5,000 inhabitants, have received almost universal cooperation from the local population. Cf. *Fortieth Annual Report of the Governor of Puerto Rico* (San Juan, Bureau of Supplies, Printing and Transportation, 1940), p. 18; also San Juan dispatches, *La Prensa* (New York), October 29, December 7, 1940.

42. Great Harbor, one of the most secure basins in the Windward Islands, is a naval defensive area. The Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration has built a landing pier and quarters for use of the United States fleet at Culebra. Other defense works are now in progress there. Cf. Puerto Rico, Department of Education, *Puerto Rico: A Guide to the Island of Boriquen* (New York, The University Society, 1940), p. 378.

43. Cf. *Annual Report of the Major General Commandant, United States Marine Corps, for the Fiscal Year 1940* (Washington, mimeographed, December 13, 1940), p. 3.

44. Since the waters around St. Thomas are subject to continuous ocean swells, patrol-plane operation at this base is difficult and at times impossible. The present naval program, therefore, calls for only one patrol-plane squadron in a tender-based status, although the Marine squadron there is maintained on a permanent basis. Cf. U.S., 76th Congress, 1st Session, *House Document No. 65*, cited, p. 17.

stroyers and cruisers in Caribbean maneuvers.⁴⁵ Although the harbor is too close to Puerto Rico to offer much strategic advantage to the United States, this country has always recognized that it would be unsafe to allow hostile forces to become established there. The submarine base, started in June 1939 with P.W.A. funds, is now being improved with 1940 defense appropriations for supply storages and new piers for submarines and tenders. Like the Marine air base, the submarine base is scheduled for completion before July 1941, and will serve as a defense outpost of the main Caribbean naval base at San Juan. For defending the Virgin Islands themselves, the army air corps is to have a station on the island of St. Croix, 37 miles south of St. Thomas.⁴⁶ St. Croix, St. Thomas and Puerto Rico already enjoy a regular schedule of civilian air service.

The United States has a number of small Caribbean islands which are not defense outposts, but which might some day be useful to the fleet or air force in Caribbean operations. They include the tiny island of Navassa, about 100 miles south of Guantánamo Bay; the Swan Islands, the same distance north of Honduras; several banks and cays between Jamaica and the Central American mainland; and Great Corn and Little Corn Islands, about 35 miles off the coast of Nicaragua and leased from that country in 1916 for 99 years.⁴⁷ Navassa is now used only as a lighthouse station, with wireless equipment for signalling. A radio station was established on the Swan Islands as an emergency measure during the hurricane season in 1939, and 1940 appropriations provide for its continued use by the Weather Bureau.⁴⁸ The Corn Islands were leased

45. During the 1938-39 winter maneuvers, 23 warships rode at anchor in and about the harbor at one time. The largest vessel ever docked in the harbor is the S.S. *Nieuw Amsterdam*, of 36,286 tons. Cf. *Annual Report of the Governor of the Virgin Islands for the Fiscal Year 1939* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1939), p. 8. The United States naval station at St. Thomas was abandoned in 1931, when administration of the Virgin Islands was shifted from the Navy Department to the Department of the Interior.

46. Work has started at St. Croix Airport, now a municipal landing field 4,650 by 900 feet.

47. Navassa, Great Swan and Great Corn Islands might all be developed as emergency air fields for patrol planes. Navassa is nearly two miles long, more than a mile wide, and 130 to 250 feet high; its surface is almost level. Great Swan Island is very flat and almost uniformly about 60 feet above sea level. Since it is thickly wooded, it would have to be cleared before its natural advantages could be exploited for air use; its strategic location, however—midway between Panama and the United States—emphasizes its potential value as a staging base for planes en route to the Canal. Great Corn Island, which has a level coastal plain about half a mile wide, could be developed for limited use by light planes.

48. Cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year 1940* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1940), p. 15.

49. For a succinct review of the Nicaragua project, cf. James L. Denig, "The Proposed Nicaragua Canal," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, July 1939, pp. 1012-25. For text of the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty of August 5, 1914 (ratified two years later), containing terms of the United States lease and canal rights in Nicaragua, cf. United States, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols, and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1910-1923* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1923), vol. III, pp. 2740-42.

in anticipation of a Nicaragua Canal, and would be useful as outposts for the defense of an interoceanic waterway north of Panama.⁴⁹

The PANAMA CANAL ZONE,⁵⁰ the keystone of American defense with a one-ocean navy, has long been strongly fortified. Although details of its fortifications are kept strictly secret, army leaders have stated that the Canal Zone's harbor defense armament is adequate to repel any attack by surface vessels alone, and that the existing mobile garrison could cope with any initial raids which might be made by a hostile landing force.⁵¹ This garrison, moreover, is being steadily increased,⁵² and the army has careful plans for reinforcing it rapidly in case of an emergency. The only real dangers to the Canal, under present circumstances, are air attack and sabotage. To reduce the extent of damage which either of these forms of attack might inflict, the existing locks, dams and essential machinery have been "bomb-proofed";⁵³ and an additional set of locks, scheduled for completion in 1945 or 1946, is now being built.⁵⁴ Rigid control measures—in civil and military areas alike—are enforced as a further check on the danger of sabotage.⁵⁵

50. Under the Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty of November 18, 1903, the Republic of Panama granted "to the United States in perpetuity the use, occupation and control" of the Panama Canal Zone, "extending to the distance of five miles on each side" of the Canal. The United States similarly acquired in perpetuity all islands within three miles of the entrances to the Canal, and in addition the islands of Perico, Naos, Culebra and Flamenco—situated in the Bay of Panama and useful for defense of the Canal. Cf. Malloy, *Treaties, 1776-1909*, cited, vol. II, p. 1350.

51. Cf. address of Brigadier General George V. Strong, Assistant Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, War Department *Press Release*, May 6, 1940. An overland attack on the Canal from South American territory is virtually impossible, owing to the extremely difficult terrain.

52. In October 1940 General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, revealed that army plans call for a garrison of about 30,000 men in the Panama Canal Department, and it was hoped that the men now being trained would be ready for service in the Canal Zone as soon as the shelter being built for them is completed. Cf. *Army and Navy Journal*, October 5, 1940, p. 115. At present about 23,000 men are stationed at the Canal. Cf. "The Land Divided—The World United," *Fortune*, January 1941, pp. 64-65.

53. Vital mechanisms in the Canal system have been reinforced against destruction by explosive means in so far as modern engineering skill can strengthen them. New devices are constantly being installed. It would still be theoretically possible for a lucky hit of one large bomb, or a vessel blown up in the locks, to render the Canal useless until repairs could be made—perhaps for one or two months. Cf. statement of General George C. Marshall, U.S., 76th Congress, 3d Session, *Hearings before the Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations on H.R. 10263* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1940), p. 242.

54. Housing has been constructed for the workers on this project, and contracts have been signed for dry excavation for the locks themselves. Cf. *The New York Times*, December 5, 1940. The new locks will be 140 feet wide—30 feet wider than the existing locks—and will permit the United States to build larger battleships and airplane carriers, at present limited by the size of the Canal locks. Congress has authorized expenditure of \$277,000,000 for the locks, which will be restricted to use by the United States navy. They will be roughly parallel to the existing locks, but separated by about a mile and a half.

55. For details, cf. C. H. Calhoun, "The Watch on Our Life Line," *The New York Times Magazine*, September 15, 1940, pp. 4-5; "The Land Divided—The World United," cited.

while anti-aircraft armament and a garrison of pursuit aviation are ready to beat off any air attacks. To be certain of success against such hostile ventures, however, the present defensive forces would probably require a more adequate warning than could be guaranteed. While the Canal Zone is now defended by some of the most modern anti-aircraft guns and mobile artillery, it is still deficient in up-to-date equipment, and its air force is not yet adequate to insure safety against a sudden surprise attack.⁵⁶ Despite these handicaps, the army has greatly increased the effectiveness of the Canal Zone's defenses during the past year by reorganizing its harbor defense units, anti-aircraft artillery, and air corps so that they can be quickly strengthened as new personnel and equipment are available.⁵⁷ The air force is being rapidly expanded, and construction of another airport—Howard Field, on Bruja Point, near the Pacific entrance to the Canal—began last year. This new field will be the largest and most modern airport in the Canal Zone. Older army air bases are located at Albrook Field (also at the Pacific entrance, only six miles from Howard Field) and France Field (on the Atlantic side). Nine army stations, camps and posts are grouped around these points as fortified zones for units of anti-aircraft, coast artillery and infantry.

The Canal Zone also serves as an important outlying base for the navy. At Coco Solo, on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus, a major naval air base is used as a permanent station for patrol-plane squadrons, and an active submarine base is fully equipped with shops and maintenance facilities for submarines and small surface vessels. In 1940 Congress authorized construction of another hangar and additional storage space at Coco Solo. On the Pacific side, a naval operating base and ammunition depot are located at Balboa, near a commercial drydock large enough for capital ships.⁵⁸ The navy has planned to construct a submarine base at Balboa but, for want of funds, work on the project has not yet begun.⁵⁹

The effectiveness of Canal Zone fortifications depends to a great extent on the defense cooperation of near-by Latin American republics, from whose territory a destructive aerial attack on the Canal could be launched. While it is imperative that an enemy be prevented from establishing bases in Latin America, United States planes would find the use of such bases

highly expedient in the event of any attack on the Canal. Because of the narrow confines of the Canal Zone, American planes based there would lack sufficient space to intercept a raid. In view of this situation, the General Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation concluded between the United States and the Republic of Panama in March 1936 gave the two countries reciprocal rights, in case of war or threat of aggression, to "take such measures of prevention and defense as they may consider necessary for the protection of their common interests."⁶⁰ The Panamanian government has also granted United States forces the right to hold military maneuvers and exercises in territory adjacent to the Canal but outside the Canal Zone, and has recognized that it would be desirable for United States troops to act first and gain permission later in case a surprise attack required immediate use of additional Panamanian territory for defense of the Canal.⁶¹ The army already has a large flying field at Río Hato—overlooking the Gulf of Panama, 75 miles from the Pacific locks of the Canal—and emergency fields at other places in the Republic of Panama known only to the air forces.⁶² Despite persistent reports of anti-United States elements in the present Panamanian government, there has been no indication that Panama would repudiate its contractual obligations to this country.

BASES AND AMERICAN SECURITY

The possibility—however remote—that Germany might gain control over both the French and British fleets has forced the United States to double its defense efforts in the Atlantic. To counter the new threat to American security, Congress in July 1940 appropriated funds for strengthening the United States navy by 1,325,000 tons, representing a 70 per cent increase. In September the President further reinforced American defense, paradoxical as it might seem, by transferring 50 destroyers to Britain—in return for naval and air bases at eight British colonies in the Western Hemisphere. This transaction strengthened the United States directly as well as indirectly. A prominent representative of the navy has asserted that the new bases, when developed, will increase by 75 per cent the fleet's efficiency in Atlantic operations.⁶³

The new Atlantic bases will require substantial

56. Six months after the European war started, President Roosevelt declared it was imperative that the existing strength of the Canal in planes and artillery be increased 100 per cent. Cf. *Army and Navy Journal*, March 2, 1940, p. 612. Twelve Congressmen, returning on December 21 from a 12-day trip to the Canal Zone, stressed its lack of modern aircraft. Cf. *The New York Times*, December 22, 1940.

57. Cf. *Army and Navy Journal*, March 16, 1940, p. 643.

58. The Balboa drydock—1,000 feet long, 110 feet wide, and with a depth of 47½ feet over the sill—is the same size as the Canal's present locks, and hence can take any vessel that can pass through the Canal. Cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Sailing Directions for the West Coasts of Mexico and Central America* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1939), H.O. No. 84, p. 369.

59. Cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Press Memorandum*, September 17, 1940.

60. United States, *Treaty Series No. 945* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1939), p. 20. The treaty was signed at Washington March 2, 1936, but ratifications were not exchanged until July 27, 1939.

61. Cf. note of the Panamanian Minister, Augusto Boyd, to Secretary Hull, February 1, 1939, *ibid.*, p. 67. For a pertinent discussion of United States relations with Panama, cf. N. J. Padelford, "American Rights in the Panama Canal," *The American Journal of International Law*, July 1940, pp. 416-42.

62. Cf. Calhoun, "The Watch on Our Life Line," cited, p. 25.

63. Rear Admiral Clark H. Woodward, Commandant of the Third Naval District, in an address before the Academy of Political Science in New York on November 13, 1940.

preparation before they are ready for full-time use, but each of the eight British colonies possesses valuable resources—not included in the sites leased—which would probably be shared with American forces if British and United States interests in the Western Hemisphere were jointly threatened. The sites in Newfoundland, Bermuda, St. Lucia, Antigua and Jamaica, moreover, became available for partial use by air and naval forces almost as soon as the agreement was concluded. While essential developments at the eight base sites are not expected to be finished for almost two years—and “completion” of the bases will take much longer⁶⁴—tender-based seaplanes or submarines could use any of the new bases on a few days’ notice. By the middle of November 1940, United States patrol squadrons were operating regularly out of Newfoundland, Bermuda and St. Lucia.

Reinforcement of United States bases in the Caribbean is designed to safeguard the Panama Canal, and to provide a relatively invulnerable center of seapower for the United States fleet. In accordance with American naval strategy, the Canal must be kept open at all times to assure that “the greatest possible force” will be brought against an enemy “at the decisive point and time.” Even after the two-ocean navy is completed, therefore, the Canal will be vital to American security. With the Panama Canal open, a fleet based in the Caribbean can be reinforced quickly from either ocean. Fortifications at the Canal give the United States absolute control over entrance into the Caribbean from the Pacific, while the semi-circle of bases to the east—with American-owned Puerto Rico as the major stronghold—are rapidly tightening United States dominance over all passages from the Atlantic. This country’s unprecedented defense activity at Guantánamo Bay, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands—and the extensive training exercises held in the Caribbean this winter—indicate the significance of that vital sea area in United States naval strategy. Since the Caribbean contains no hostile power, the fleet based there would not be threatened with attack from the rear.

64. Strictly speaking, a base is never complete, since it must be continuously strengthened and improved in accordance with changing military needs.

It would be ready to strike at the flank of an enemy crossing the North Atlantic, and could interrupt the communications of any foe moving into the South Atlantic.⁶⁵

There are only two possible routes for invasion of the United States from Europe—one via Iceland, Greenland and Canada, the second via the western coast of Africa and South America. While the possibility of overseas raids on the American coasts cannot be ruled out, the United States fleet, air forces and coastal defenses make any direct large-scale attack on this country impracticable. The new bases, in conjunction with Canadian-American arrangements for joint defense, virtually remove the feasibility of invasion by the northern route, and diminish the likelihood of sporadic coastal raids. At present, however, there is no adequate safeguard against attack by way of South America on the Panama Canal and, subsequently, the United States. The two-ocean navy cannot be completed before 1946, and a hostile power intent on closing the Canal would plan to strike while the United States fleet is concentrated in the Pacific. Although South American mountains and jungles provide an effective barrier to attack on the Canal by land, there are many good airports throughout the continent which might enable enemy bombers to reach their objective in quick, easy flights. Once established in South America, hostile forces could be dislodged only after a long and costly struggle. The United States, therefore, has a definite stake in defense of the entire hemisphere. While this country has not entered into elaborate defense arrangements with any Latin American republic except Panama, the political and legal groundwork for a broad scheme of cooperative military action has been prepared. In the last analysis, successful hemisphere defense may depend on the rapid extension of inter-American cooperation to include joint military action against external aggression. A first step in this direction may be the development of inter-American bases for common defense, which would implement the continued improvement of existing American defense outposts in the Atlantic.

65. Cf. Major G. F. Eliot, “New Bases in the Atlantic,” *Life*, September 16, 1940, p. 20.

The February 1 issue of FOREIGN POLICY REPORTS will be:

EGYPT, THE SUEZ CANAL AND THE WAR

by Louis E. Frechling